

**In the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior listing, and versions, of claims in the application.

Claim 1: (Currently Amended) A method for utilizing a product code having product information contained therein for interfacing a user node to a remote node over a network, the user node having application software installed thereat for examining product code input thereto, comprising the steps of:

5 extracting the product information from the product code at the user node for input thereto, which product code is disposed on or in close association with an associated product;

in response to the step of extracting, the application software:

assembling a message packet containing the product information[[:]], and

transmitting the message packet to an intermediate node on the network;

10 receiving from the intermediate node on the network, instructional code that instructs the user node to connect to one of the remote nodes on the network that has a defined association with the extracted product information defined at the intermediate node; and

15 connecting the user node to the one of the remote nodes in accordance with the received instructional code such that connection to the remote location node is controlled by the intermediate node through the instructional code, wherein all connections to desired locations remote nodes having defined relationships to product information are controlled only by the intermediate node and not by any actions at the user node other than the operation of extracting, and wherein actions at the user node do not prevent connection or effect connection to the remote node location.

Claim 2: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the product code comprises machine readable code.

Claim 3: (Original) The method of Claim 2 wherein the step of extracting comprises scanning the machine readable code to extract the product code information therefrom.

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Claim 4: (Original) The method of Claim 2, wherein the machine readable code comprises a bar code.

Claim 5: (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein the bar code represents a UPC.

Claim 6: (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein the bar code represents an ISBN number.

Claim 7: (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein the bar code represents an EAN number.

Claim 8: (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, and further comprising the step of interfacing with the network utilizing network routing information embedded with the instructional code.

Claim 9: (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting the message packet comprises the steps of:

transmitting the message packet containing the product information to the intermediate node on the network; and

5 at the intermediate node:

comparing the product information with an associative database disposed at the intermediate node and having stored therein associations with a plurality of product information and associated routing information to at least one of the remote nodes on the network; and  
determining if there is a match; and

10 if there is a match, returning instructional code from the intermediate node to the user node, which instructional code has embedded therein with the routing information to the location on the network of the at least one of the remote nodes at which the product information was extracted for assembly into the message packet.

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Claim 10: (New) The method of Claim 9, wherein the message packet comprises a data transmission that includes a destination address of the intermediate node on the network, a source address that defines the location of the user node on the network and a data field that includes the product information.

Claim 11: (New) The method of Claim 10, wherein the destination address of the intermediate node is associated with the application software installed at the user node.

Claim 12: (New) The method of Claim 11, wherein the application software installed at the user node is operating prior to the step of extracting.

Claim 13: (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein the message packet comprises a data transmission that includes a destination address of the intermediate node on the network, a source address that defines the location of the user node on the network and a data field that includes the product information.

Claim 14: (New) The method of Claim 13, wherein the destination address of the intermediate node is associated with the application software installed at the user node.

Claim 15: (New) The method of Claim 4, wherein the application software installed at the user node is operating prior to the step of extracting.

Claim 16: (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein the product code is visible.

Claim 17: (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein the product code has the product information embedded within a visible indicia.

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Claim 18: (New) The method of Claim 17, wherein the step of extracting comprises scanning the product code with an optical scanner that is operable to extract the product information from the product code.

Claim 19: (New) A method for utilizing a product code having product information contained therein for interfacing a computing device at a user node on a network to at least one of a plurality of remote nodes on the network, the computing device at the user node having application software installed thereat for examining product code input thereto, comprising the steps of:

5 extracting the product information from the product code at the user node for input to the computing device at the user node;

in response to the step of extracting, the application software:

assembling a data transmission containing the product information, and

transmitting the data transmission to an intermediate node on the network;

10 receiving from the intermediate node on the network instructional code that instructs the computing device at the user node to connect to one of the remote nodes on the network that has a defined association with the extracted product information, which defined association is defined at the intermediate node; and

15 connecting the computing device at the user node to the one of the remote nodes in accordance with the received instructional code such that connection to the one of the remote nodes is controlled by the intermediate node through the instructional code, wherein connections to remote nodes on the network in response to the step of extracting are controlled only by the intermediate node and not by any actions at the user node other than the operation of extracting, and wherein actions at the user node do not prevent connection or effect connection to the one of the remote nodes.

Claim 20: (New) The method of Claim 19, wherein the product code comprises machine readable code.

Claim 21: (New) The method of Claim 20 wherein the step of extracting comprises scanning the machine readable code with a scanning machine to extract the product code information therefrom.

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Claim 22: (New) The method of Claim 20, wherein the machine readable code comprises a bar code.

Claim 23: (New) The method of Claim 19, and further comprising the step of interfacing with the network utilizing network routing information embedded within the instructional code, which network routing information uniquely defines the one of the remote nodes on the network.

Claim 24: (New) The method of Claim 13, wherein the message packet comprises a message packet that includes a destination address that defines the unique network routing information to the intermediate node on the network, a source address that defines the unique network routing information to the user node on the network and a data field that includes the product information.

Claim 25: (New) The method of Claim 24, wherein the destination address of the intermediate node is associated with the application software installed at the computing device at the user node.

Claim 26: (New) The method of Claim 25, wherein the application software installed on the computing device at the user node is operating prior to the step of extracting.

Claim 27: (New) A method for utilizing a product code having product information contained therein for interfacing a computing device at a user node on a network to at least one of a plurality of remote nodes on the network, the computing device at the user node having application software installed thereat for examining product code input thereto, comprising the steps of:

5 extracting the product information from the product code at the user node for input to the computing device at the user node ;

in response to the step of extracting, the application software:

assembling a data transmission containing the product information, and  
transmitting the data transmission to an intermediate node on the network,

10 at the receiving node:

providing an associative database disposed at the intermediate node and having

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stored therein associations with a plurality of product information and associated routing information to at least one of the remote nodes on the network,

15 comparing the received product information with the associations stored in the associative database,

determining if there is a match, and

20 if there is a match, returning instructional code from the intermediate node to the user, which instructional code has embedded therein the routing information to the location on the network of the one of the remote nodes, which instructional code instructs the computing device at the user node to connect to the one of the remote nodes;

receiving from the intermediate node on the network the instructional code; and

25 connecting the computing device at the user node to the one of the remote nodes in accordance with the received instructional code such that connection to the one of the remote nodes is controlled by the intermediate node through the instructional code, wherein connection to remote nodes is controlled only by the intermediate node and not by any actions at the user node other than the operation of extracting, and wherein actions at the user node do not prevent connection or effect connection to the one of the remote nodes.

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